

Draft Environmental Impact Statement
and General Management Plan

MOJAVE
NATIONAL PRESERVE • CALIFORNIA

Produced as a Component of the
Northern and Eastern Mojave Planning Effort

Draft
General Management Plan
Environmental Impact Statement
Mojave National Preserve
San Bernardino County, California

This Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement presents the proposed management approach and two alternatives for the management of the 1.6 million-acre Mojave National Preserve in the northeastern Mojave Desert in California. Mojave is a new unit of the National Park Service (NPS) established by Congress on October 31, 1994, by the California Desert Protection Act. This General Management Plan (GMP) serves as the initial overall management strategy for the next 10–15 years under which more detailed activity or implementation plans are prepared. A general management plan is general rather than specific in nature, and focuses on purposes of the unit, its significant attributes, its mission in relation to the overall mission of the agency, what activities are appropriate within these constraints, and resource protection strategies. It also provides guidelines for visitor use and development of facilities for visitor enjoyment and administration of the preserve.

The proposed action envisions Mojave National Preserve as a natural environment and a cultural landscape, where the protection of native desert ecosystems and processes is assured for future generations. The protection and perpetuation of native species in a self-sustaining environment is a primary long-term goal. The proposal seeks to manage the preserve to perpetuate the sense of discovery and adventure that currently exists. This means minimizing development inside the preserve, including the proliferation of signs,

new campgrounds, and interpretive exhibits. The National Park Service would look to adjacent communities to provide most support services (food, gas, and lodging) for visitors. The proposal also seeks to provide the public, consistent with the NPS mission, with maximum opportunities for roadside camping, backcountry camping and access to the preserve via existing roads. The proposal would seek funding for the complete historic restoration of the Kelso Depot and its use as a museum and interpretive facility. A balance is struck between the NPS mission of resource preservation and other mandates from Congress, such as maintaining grazing, hunting, and mining under NPS regulations and continuing the existence of major utility corridors. The proposal would maintain the ability of landowners in Mojave to maintain their current way of life, while seeking funding to purchase property from willing sellers where proposed uses conflict with the primary mission of preserving resources. Nearly 230,000 acres within the preserve are in nonfederal ownership.

In addition to the proposal (alternative 1), the alternatives included in this document also include the existing management (alternative 2) and an optional management approach (alternative 3). The existing management alternative describes the continuation of current management strategies. It is commonly referred to as the no-action or status quo alternative. Under this alternative, existing visitor and administrative support services and facilities would be maintained in their current locations. There would be few improvements in existing structures and there would be no change in road maintenance, although some roads might be improved if funding became available. No significant changes in existing recreation use would occur. Kelso Depot would be stabilized if funding could be obtained, but it would not be restored. Land acquisition would focus on obtaining minimum funds to acquire property from willing sellers and properties where uses conflict with the preserve mission. The optional approach provides for an increase in the facilities and services provided for public enjoyment. A small visitor contact building might be built at Kelso to provide information. Land would be acquired in sensitive areas and wilderness.

The 90-day opportunity for public comment during this phase of the conservation planning and impact analysis process starts with the Environmental Protection Agency filing a notice of availability in the Federal Register. All review comments must be received by that time and should be sent to the following address:

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U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service
in cooperation with
U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management / U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service